

Awareness,
Recognition?

A state of mind?
A Place?

Waking in the Blue



The night attendant, a B.U. Sophomore,
rouses from the **mare's-nest** of his drowsy head
propped on *The Meaning of Meaning*.
He catwalks down our corridor.

Azure day

Makes my agonized **blue** window bleaker.
Crows **maunder** on the **petrified** fairway.

Absence! My hearts grow tense
As though a **harpoon** were **sparring** for the kill.
(This is the house for the “mentally ill”)

Vague



Feeling hunted





Waking in the Blue...

reconfigured to mean

Waking in FEAR

Fear of What?

- **“Absence!”** – Not knowing what to believe
 - Not knowing how to feel
 - Feeling estranged from everyone/everything
 - Losing one’s sense of identity
 - Feeling like you’re drowning

What use is my sense of humour?

I grin at Stanley, now sunk in his sixties,

once a **Harvard all-American fullback**,

Archetypal success
story

(if such were possible!)

still hoarding the build of a boy in his twenties,

as he soaks, a **ramrod**

Derogatory term:
Brawn and no brains

with a **muscle** seal

in his long tub,

Sarcastic tone

vaguely urinous from the Victorian plumbing.

Key word. Recall maunder of stanza 1 -
describing state of mind

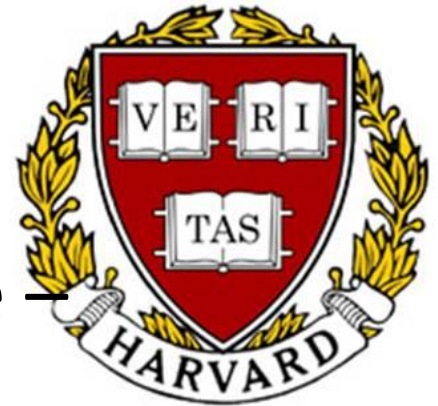




Heavy, hard, rigid, solid

A kingly granite profile in a crimson gold-cap,
worn all day, all night,
he thinks only of his figure,
of slimming on sherbert and ginger ale –
more cut off from words than a seal.

thoughts = words



This is the way day breaks in Bowditch Hall at McLean's;
the hooded night lights bring out "Bobbie,"
Porcellian '29
a replica of Louis XVI
without the wig –
redolent and **roly-poly** as a sperm **whale**,
as he swashbuckles about in his birthday suit
and horses at chairs.

Corpulent imagery

Absurd image



Sardonic tone



These victorious figures of
bravado ossified young



Delusional,
self-deception



Mineral imagery

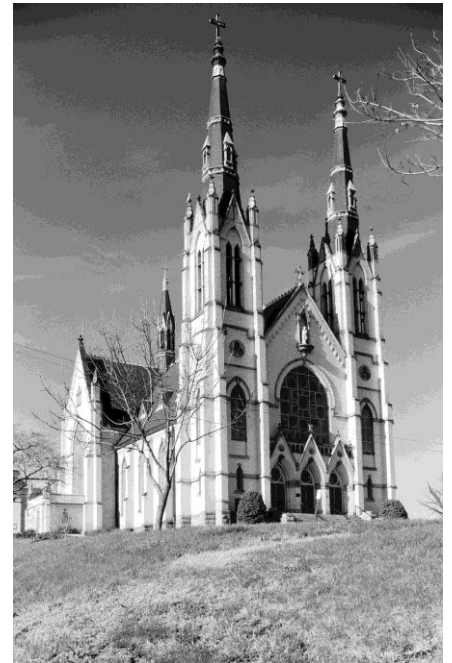


When indoctrination
occurs

In between limits of day,
hours and hours go under the crew haircuts
and slightly too little nonsensical bachelor twinkle
of the Roman Catholic attendants.
(There are no Mayflower
screwballs in the Catholic Church.)



Why the connection between time
and the Church?



Fleeting confidence

After a hearty New England breakfast,
I weigh two hundred pounds
this morning. **Cock of the walk,**
I strut in my turtle-necked French sailor's jersey
before the metal shaving mirrors,
and see the **shaky future** grow familiar
in the pinched, indigenous faces
of these thoroughbred mental cases,
twice my age and **half my weight.**

Irony



Inclusive language



We are all old-timers

Each of us holds a locked razor.



Forming an Overview

- Why represent mental illness with surreal images?
- Why the network of images conveying confidence?
- What does Lowell recognise when he looks into the mirror?
- How would you describe the tone of the last two lines?